

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers

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HAP ARNOLD'S BILL BRUCE BOYS SERIES

By David K. Vaughan

LONG ADVENTURE NOVEL EVERY WEEK.

No. 3 NEW SERIES

*The Cheerful
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EVERY TUESDAY

JACK WRIGHT
AMONG THE PIRATES



The buccanniers fired a volley at the invaders as they ran for the submarine and scrambled on board.

Next Tuesday: "JACK WRIGHT'S FLYING AVENGER."

Dime Novel Sketches #238

THE CHEERFUL ADVENTURE LIBRARY (New Series)

Publisher: Aldine Publishing Co., Crown Court, Chancery Lane, London, England. Issues: 22 (Highest number seen advertised). Dates: May 9, 1911, to Oct. 3, 1911. Schedule: Weekly. Size: 8½ x 6". Pages: 16. Price: ½d. Illustrations: Navy blue and white pictorial cover. Contents: Reprint of Jack Wright stories originally published by Frank Tlusey in the U.S.A. with a few Deadwood Dick stories mixed in.

HAP ARNOLD'S BILL BRUCE BOYS' BOOKS

By David K. Vaughan

On December 17, 1925, Brigadier General William "Billy" Mitchell was found guilty of court-martial charges brought against him as a result of his outspoken criticism of governmental reluctance to improve the nation's military air forces. Mitchell blamed the sad condition of military aircraft in general, and Air Service aircraft in particular, directly on the neglect of the military and civilian leaders of the Army and Navy, who, Mitchell said, looked upon their aviation branches as unwanted step-children. The establishment of a separate and autonomous air force, Mitchell believed, would bring about the planning and guidance necessary for an efficient and up-to-date aerial fleet.

At the time of the Mitchell trial Major Henry H. "Hap" Arnold was stationed in Washington as Chief of the Air Service Information Office. Arnold's sentiments on the subject of a separate air force matched those of Mitchell, and after the trial concluded Arnold continued to support the Mitchell cause. As head of the Air Service Information Office, he was in a propitious position to do so. But early in February of 1926, Arnold was discovered to have been a key figure responsible for the preparation and distribution of a letter to active and reserve Air Service personnel requesting their assistance in working towards Mitchell's goals. Arnold's boss, General Mason Patrick, head of the Air Service, was furious when he learned that one of his subordinates was actively promoting a policy for which there was no official support and in a manner that could bring Patrick only embarrassment and discredit. Patrick called Arnold into his office and told Arnold he had three days to pack his belongings. His destination was Fort Riley, Kansas, and his new job was Commanding Officer of the 16th Observation Squadron, which was equipped with an obsolete, two-place, World War I biplane, the DH-4.

Hap Arnold's Fort Riley period extends from 1926 to 1928, when Arnold left Fort Riley to attend Command and Staff School at Fort Leavenworth. This period might appear to have been the least productive and least eventful of Arnold's truly impressive military career, a career which began with his graduation from West Point in 1907 and ended with his retirement as Chief of the Army Air Force in 1946. While he was stationed at Fort Riley, Arnold participated in no record-setting aerial activities; his only unusual aerial achievement was his unit's success rate in delivering Calvin Coolidge's mail to the president's summer residence in the Black Hills of South Dakota, flying it up on a regular basis from North Platte, Nebraska. However, one of Arnold's most interesting but little-known accomplishments was undertaken during his time at Fort Riley, an accomplishment he completed not with an airplane but with a pen. For it was while he was at Fort Riley that he wrote a six-volume series of boys' books describing the adventures of a U. S. Army Air Service pilot named Bill Bruce.

This six-volume series has received surprisingly little attention. Thomas Coffey, in his recent and well-received biography of Hap Arnold, entitled HAP, mentions the titles of only four of the six volumes in the series. In another important study of early Air Force leaders, A FEW GREAT CAPTAINS, DeWitt Copp does mention the fact that there are six books in the series, but he lists only the first title in the series, and even that title is incorrectly given. This perfunctory treatment of the series

by recent biographers is exceeded, however, by that of the author himself; Arnold's autobiography, GLOBAL MISSION, omits any reference to the Bill Bruce books, nor does he mention his other literary efforts, including the three books he co-authored with Ira Eaker.

Arnold's Bill Bruce books offer enjoyable and instructive reading, perhaps even more so for readers today than for readers when they first appeared in 1928. First, the books are eminently readable; their style is direct and straightforward and all aviation terms and operations are fully explained. It is apparent that Arnold intended to entertain and educate his readers. Second, they are historically accurate and culturally informative; the experiences of Bill Bruce are based on actual Air Service training and operational programs. Third, they are honest and unromanticized in their scenes of Air Service flying, especially in comparison with other aviation adventure series books of the time. Fourth, they illustrate important aspects of Arnold's own career from 1917 through 1920, and tell us much about his view of Air Service flying tasks. Fifth, they create a favorable and sympathetic picture of Air Service personnel. Sixth, they continue, in their own special and understated way, the arguments in favor of an improved air arm urged by Billy Mitchell and his followers.

The six titles of the series are, in the order in which they were apparently intended to be read:

1. BILL BRUCE AND THE PIONEER AVIATORS (Events of 1909-1910)
2. BILL BRUCE, THE FLYING CADET (1917-1918)
3. BILL BRUCE BECOMES AN ACE (1918)
4. BILL BRUCE ON BORDER PATROL (1919)
5. BILL BRUCE IN THE TRANSCONTINENTAL RACE (1919)
6. BILL BRUCE ON FOREST PATROL (1919-1920)

These books describe the flying experiences of Bill Bruce from 1909 through 1920, from the early days of aviation to World War I flying to post-war activities of the teens and twenties.

The inspiration for the name of the series' central figure is not difficult to discover: William Bruce Arnold, the Arnold's second son and third child, was approaching the age of eight in the spring of 1926. There is an apocryphal story, told by both Coffey and Copp, about how young Bill Bruce Arnold's slow progress in developing his reading skills was the direct cause of Hap's decision to write the Bill Bruce books:

When he discovered that Bruce couldn't read well, he took a look at the boy's books and swore a mighty oath. "Who in hell could write stuff like this!" he said to his wife. "No wonder the kid can't read. Bee, get rid of this god-damned trash!"

Thereupon he sat down and became an author. In two months, amid all the other things he was doing, he wrote BILLY BRUCE AND THE PIONEER AVIATORS.

(A FEW GREAT CAPTAINS, page 54)

While this story illustrates the genuine Arnold blend of energy, impulse, humor, and profanity, the foundation for the development of the Bill Bruce series was really laid in a much more considered and rational fashion. When he was stationed in Washington from 1924 to 1926, Hap ran the Air Service's information office (GLOBAL MISSION, page 113). As the top officer of the information office, he was tasked with promoting awareness of Air Service activities and programs. As a result of this and previous duty with the information office during World War I, Hap had developed an understanding of the need for promoting Air Service interests

as well as the techniques for doing so, especially in written form.

The Bill Bruce series was not Hap's first major writing project; his first effort was a book entitled *AIRMEN AND AIRCRAFT: AN INTRODUCTION TO AERONAUTICS*, published in 1926 by the Ronald Press as one of an extended series of aviation books. This 185-page volume consists of an informal review of major milestones in aviation history, a discussion of basic types and distinguishing features of aircraft and balloons, and a summary of civil and military pilot training requirements. Arnold undoubtedly began work on this book while he was in Washington in 1925; his duties and his professional contacts there would naturally have lent themselves to the undertaking of such a project. Arnold's preface to *AIRMEN AND AIRCRAFT* is dated May 15, 1926; it is not likely he wrote the book during his first two months at Fort Riley.

The link connecting *AIRMEN AND AIRCRAFT* and the first volume of the Bill Bruce series is evident in the common purpose of both books—to provide an introduction to the people, events, and kinds of early aviation activities. Both books also contain the wonderful story of the disappointed undertaker who always drove his horse-drawn hearse to the Wright brothers' field near Dayton whenever they trained new pilots, hoping—in vain, as it turned out—that his business might pick up (*AIRMEN AND AIRCRAFT*, page 11; *PIONEER AVIATORS*, page 38).

The first volume of the series, *PIONEER AVIATORS*, describes the young Bill Bruce and his friend Bob Finch as they witness some of the important aviation events that actually occurred in the New York City area in the fall of 1909 and 1910. The major portion of the activity in the first half of the book takes place on Governor's Island, where Bill Bruce observes the assembly of an early Wright Flyer, and talks to Wilbur Wright; he also observes the arrival of Glenn Curtis at the conclusion of his historic flight down the Hudson River from Albany. The other center of activity in the book is the aviation field at Garden City, where the events described include a balloon flight and a model aircraft contest. The final aerial event described in the book is an account of the International Aviation Meet held at Belmont Park in the fall of 1910; here Bill meets Ralph Johnstone, Arch Hoxsey, and other early aviators. The action of *PIONEER AVIATORS* is episodic, focusing on a series of separate but special activities, for Arnold's purpose is to provide an overview of the primary areas and sensations of early aerial activity—flying, ballooning, and model building. Arnold introduces an occasional suspicious character to add the degree of suspense usually associated with standard mystery and adventure series books, but that aspect is very much underplayed in *PIONEER AVIATORS*.

The persistent villain of the series—Andre—is introduced in the next book of the series, *BILL BRUCE, THE FLYING CADET*. In this book Bill Bruce and his friend Bob Finch enter the Air Service shortly after the United States declares war on Germany. After passing their physicals, they travel by train from their homes in Flower City, Long Island, to attend ground school at the University of California at Berkeley, one of the several centers for ground instruction which were actually established at a number of universities around the country during World War I. There they encounter Andre, a devious, fast-talking, underhanded classmate. Andre, envious of Bill Bruce's hard work and success in the ground school program, is caught when he attempts to have Bill accused of cheating on the final examination. Andre is immediately expelled from the service, and as he departs he delivers this dire threat to Bill: "I didn't get you this time, Bill Bruce, but I'll get you yet" (*FLYING CADET*, page 69). While Andre attempts to "get" Bill Bruce in every one of the following volumes, he is never successful. Andre serves throughout the series as

the primary perpetrator of espionage and illegal activity.

After completing ground school at Berkely, Bill and Bob are posted to Primary Flying School at Gerstner Field, Lake Charles, Louisiana. In this section of the book Arnold provides accurate and colorful accounts of the various phases of flight instruction, including solo work, acrobatics, and night flying. The special characteristics of the Curtis JN-4D "Jenny" and the Thomas-Morse "Tommy" Scout are also given. After graduation, Bob Finch is sent to France, but Bill Bruce is detailed to stay at Gerstner Field as a flight instructor.

Bill Bruce's final assignment in the book is as a test pilot at an aircraft factory in Buffalo, New York, where he flight tests the Le Pere airplane, a new, two-place aircraft fitted with Liberty engines, and where he foils Andre's attempts to sabotage the project. During this episode Arnold provides an accurate picture of aircraft construction and assembly methods, knowledge Arnold gained during his World War I assignments. At the end of the book Bill Bruce is promoted to 1st Lieutenant and receives orders for France.

The first sequence of events in the third book, *BILL BRUCE BECOMES AN ACE*, describes Bill's adventures on board the *S. S. Suscania*, of the Cunard Line, the troop ship that takes him and hundreds of other servicemen across the Atlantic. Somehow Bill's sworn foe, Andre, has made his way onto the ship and successfully signals their presence to a German submarine, which promptly torpedoes the ship. Fortunately, Bill and his mates are rescued. Once in France, Bill reports to Issoudun, a training complex consisting of nine different airfields in which instruction was given in a variety of aircraft, mostly Nieuports of varying sizes. After completing his course at Issoudun, Bill is assigned to the 94th Aero Squadron, commanded by Kenneth Marr, a veteran of the Lafayette Escadrille. Bill's roommate turns out to be none other than Eddie Rickenbacker. Under "Rick's" guidance, Bill quickly learns successful fighter tactics and soon becomes an ace. He is shot down, seriously wounded, but recovers in time to hear that the war is over.

As in *FLYING CADET*, Arnold gives a factual and accurate account of training methods and flying tactics in *BILL BRUCE BECOMES AN ACE*. He successfully gives the feel of what it was like to be "over there." Arnold himself was never a pilot in a combat unit, although he tried to obtain an assignment to the combat area. He finally did manage to reach the front lines, but he arrived at the front on the day the Armistice went into effect (*GLOBAL MISSION*, page 84). But his trip to the front provided realistic experience that he was able to put to good use in the Bill Bruce books. For information about combat flying, he drew upon the personal accounts of several veterans, especially "Tooey" Spaatz, who was credited with two victories. Arnold gives special recognition to his friend Tooey Spaatz in *BILL BRUCE BECOMES AN ACE*, for one of the central figures in the book is a character named Major "Spots."

The concluding three volumes of the series are unified by similar flying activities, similar aircraft, and similar characters. Most of the action of these books takes place on the west coast. The first volume of the three, *BORDER PATROL*, describes Air Service efforts to stem smuggling activities along the Mexican-American border. The central airfield in *BORDER PATROL* is Rockwell Field, San Diego, a field Arnold knew well, having been assigned there twice, once before the war as a logistics officer, and after the war as the commanding officer of the western district of the Air Service (*HAP*, page 94). The action begins with a large scale airshow, featuring a race involving a Spad, an SE-5, and a Fokker D-VII. Such an airshow was actually held in May of 1919, after Arnold reported

for duty at Rockwell Field; the aerial activity apparently made quite an impression on the local populace. Then the book describes the effect of the demobilization order upon the men in the unit and upon the resources—the aircraft and replacement parts—available for flying duties. Bill and his friend Bob Finch ask to remain on duty and are able to maintain their service status because of their good war records. Many other pilots, less fortunate, are forced to leave the service.

The greater part of the action of the book focuses upon the efforts of the squadron pilots, who are patrolling the Mexican border in their DH-4s in cooperation with Federal agents, to trap a gang of smugglers, led by a mysterious individual named Andrajo, actually Bill's old enemy, Andre. This volume successfully integrates elements of plot, characterization, and suspense, to make it the most effective of the six, in my estimate, as a basic mystery and adventure story. At the same time that daily aspects of DH-4 operations are provided, the plot steadily moves toward a climactic confrontation with Andrajo and his gang.

The hazards—and the fun—of flying DH-4s are clearly portrayed. There are several forced landings attributed to mechanical problems of the kind that would actually occur while operating in such an environment, and the special details and features of the DH-4 are accurately described. There are also more references to Arnold's friends, including Major "Spots" and Jimmy Dolittle. In addition, Bill Bruce acquires a new sidekick—Sergeant Breene, an easy-going, laconic non-commissioned officer who, as the aircraft's crew chief, rides in the front seat and cheerfully accepts both the good and bad results of Bill Bruce's airmanship. It is the only instance I know of in which an NCO is given relatively top billing in a series book; his presence is, of course, based on actual Air Service practice of having maintenance personnel fly with the aircraft on unit moves.

In the fifth book in the series—*TRANSCONTINENTAL RACE*—Bill flies a DH-4 to victory in a transcontinental race for Air Service pilots and aircraft. This episode is based, once again, on fact, for in October of 1919 General Billy Mitchell set up the Transcontinental Reliability Test (*A FEW GREAT CAPTAINS*, pages 28–29). In the historical race, thirty aircraft from the east coast and thirty from the west coast flew to the opposite coast and returned, stopping at designated refueling points two to three hundred miles apart. Approximately forty refueling stops were used by participating pilots, who flew an average elapsed flying time of about 39 flying hours. Tooey Spaatz won the west coast race in an SE-5. Nine fatalities occurred all told.

In Arnold's version, no one is killed, and Bill Bruce edges out his friend Bob Finch in a race-to-the-wire finish. Bill wins in his sturdy DH-4 despite Andre's trickery, bad weather, adverse winds, and mechanical failure. Bill is assisted immeasurably by his companion, Sergeant Breene, who accompanies him on the race, and who is able to devise emergency repairs that only an experienced mechanic could provide.

The final volume in the series, *FOREST PATROL*, describes the efforts of Bill Bruce and his squadronmates as they assist the Oregon Forest Service in spotting and controlling forest fires. Once again, this activity is based on actual Air Service practice; in this instance, it was Arnold himself who developed the concept of providing assistance to the Oregon Forest Service.

In the Bill Bruce version, the squadron pilots utilize their artillery spotting techniques to aid in reporting forest fire activity; these spotting and reporting techniques were based on those used and refined by observation aircraft during World War I. Arnold knew the system well, for while he did not fly in the war, he knew of the techniques from his ex-

perience as commanding officer of the 16th Observation Squadron at Fort Riley. Bill's fellow pilots develop a system based on the artillery spotting techniques they have recently been practicing, and, operating out of airfields in Eugene, Medford, and Portland, are able to provide valuable assistance to the forest rangers. Flying more often than not with Sergeant Breene, Bill Bruce spots fires, survives flying in the mountains in low visibility, and educates forest service personnel on the value of aerial assistance. Bill also survives a narrow escape during a demonstration parachute jump (his first) when he inadvertently entangles his unopened parachute canopy in the tail section of his DH-4. And finally, Bill helps to capture a determined firebug who has been setting most of the fires—his nemesis, Andre.

Arnold's rationale for establishing forest patrol methods was an outgrowth of a concept he thought of as creating "a new pattern of national usefulness in peace time" (HAP, page 99). This was exactly the kind of innovative idea needed to improve Air Service visibility and reputation across the country. Similar motivation was behind Mitchell's instituting of the border patrol and the transcontinental reliability race (HAP, page 100).

The six volumes of Hap Arnold's Bill Bruce series fall into three relatively clearly-defined groups: the first volume, *PIONEER AVIATORS*, stands by itself as an overview of important early aviation people, events, and activities. The next two volumes, *BILL BRUCE*, *FLYING CADET*, and *BILL BRUCE BECOMES AN ACE*, describe the full spectrum of events involved in preparing Air Service aviators for participation in World War I. The final three volumes, *BORDER PATROL*, *TRANSCONTINENTAL RACE*, and *FOREST PATROL*, describe post-war activities of a kind designed to serve the national good and to educate the public about the value of a well-trained and well-equipped Air Service. In addition, the last three volumes introduce two unusual and appealing heroes: Sergeant Breene, the resourceful mechanic, and the DH-4, the versatile and rugged workhorse of the post-war Air Service. The events described in all six volumes gain in believability as a result of Hap Arnold's personal experience, his perceptive eye, and his writing skill.

The Bill Bruce series represents a number of significant achievements: in the first place, it is, for the most part, a well-constructed, well-written, and entertaining series of narratives. Second, the series accurately depicts important and representative Air Service training methods and operational procedures during the 1917-1920 period. The books also provide vivid and factual accounts of the aircraft and facilities as well as of the events themselves. Third, the series gives an in-depth picture of Air Service flying by giving vitality and appeal to a wide range of figures, from NCOs to generals. Fourth, the series describes the setbacks and frustrations as well as the successes and achievements of Air Service fliers. In six books Bill Bruce survives at least eight crash landings. Such realistic experience is seldom—if ever—found in other juvenile series books of the time. Last, the series presents Air Service fliers as motivated and dedicated individuals working on behalf of the national interest in peacetime and in wartime.

Although Hap Arnold continued to promote Air Force activities in written form throughout his career, his truly important achievements in this area have not been fully appreciated. His achievement as a spokesman to the general public about Air Service and Air Force activities was truly phenomenal, and the writing that he himself produced on behalf of that cause was large and substantial. As Arnold's reputation as a writer grows, it will be based in no small part on the merit of the Bill Bruce

books, which may prove to be among the most valuable of the legacies he left behind.

SOURCES

- H. H. Arnold, *GLOBAL MISSION* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1949)
 Thomas Coffey, *HAP* (New York: Viking, 1982)
 DeWitt Copp, *A FEW GREAT CAPTAINS* (New York: Doubleday, 1980)
 Bruce Johnson, *THE MAN WITH TWO HATS* (New York: Carlton Press, 1968)
 The six volumes of the Bill Bruce series (New York: Burt, 1928)

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AN OPEN LETTER TO THE READERS OF THE *DIME NOVEL ROUNDUP*

By J. Randolph Cox

Q: What's more fun than two dime novel collectors getting together to talk shop?

A: A dozen collectors, readers, and scholars of dime novels and series books getting together to share ideas and recharge their intellectual batteries at least once a year.

Since 1984, the annual conference of the American Culture Association (in combination with the Popular Culture Association) has provided an opportunity for just such a session. It was at the ACA meeting in Wichita, Kansas (April 22-26, 1983), that Lydia Cushman Schurman suggested creating a Dime Novel Area in the association. Soon she was writing to contributors of the *Dime Novel Roundup*, among others, to put together some panels for the next year's conference.

The first official gathering took place at Toronto, Ontario, in the Loews Westbury Hotel, March 29-April 1, 1984, with the dime novel sessions scheduled for Saturday and Sunday. There were three panels: Dime Novel Research, Dime Novel Scholarship, and Dime Novel Authors. There were seven presentations on the three panels. On Saturday evening there was a display of dime novels and an opportunity for a conversation with Eddie LeBlanc. On that occasion, Eddie was presented with a plaque in recognition of his contribution to dime novel research, in particular for his long tenure as editor of the *Dime Novel Roundup*.

Later conferences have taken place in Louisville, KY, (April 3-6, 1985), Atlanta, GA, (April 2-6, 1986), Montreal, Canada, (March 25-29, 1987), New Orleans, LA, (March 23-26, 1988), and St. Louis, MO, (April 5-8, 1989). In St. Louis we had eleven presentations on three panels and an open forum to discuss the future of dime novel research.

Traditionally, we have held the dime novel sessions on the weekend of the conference. We've found this attracts some people (presenters and audience) who might have trouble attending the entire conference.

As the founder of the group, Lydia Cushman Schurman served as the Area Chair for the first three years. It was at the Atlanta conference that I agreed to take over the responsibilities. As Area Chair I have tried to use my own enthusiasm for promoting dime novel research to guide me in shaping the content of each panel. We are fortunate in having attracted a solid core of individuals willing to share their discoveries or their current work-in-progress with us. It is becoming an ongoing discussion, an extra issue of the *Roundup*, a true "movable feast."

From the original concept of a *dime novel area* we have expanded our base to include series books and pulp magazines, wherever a clear relationship between the later forms and the earlier ones can be demonstrated. As a result, we have attracted new recruits to the cause of dime novels as popular culture. However, we do not want to lose sight of the roots of

the Area by expanding our horizons. To some extent, we are talking to ourselves at these sessions, but the conversation is quite refreshing.

The meeting in 1990 will be in Toronto again, March 7-10, at the Royal York Hotel. While this note will not appear in the *Roundup* until too late to consider official submissions for papers, I would like to encourage as many as possible to attend to sample our sessions, join us in discussion, and even informally present some of your ideas. We take ourselves and our subject seriously, but we know how to enjoy ourselves as well. You need not belong to the Association to stop by to say hello. You need not register for the full convention either, but you may decide you want to. Further questions should be addressed to me at my home address:

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Northfield, MN 55057
(507) 645-5711

A CATALOG OF PAPERS PRESENTED ON DIME NOVELS
AMERICAN CULTURE ASSOCIATION, 1984-1989

[* indicates date of publication in *Dime Novel Roundup*]

TORONTO, 1984

"The Dime Novel Detective and His Elusive Trail: Twenty Years of Dime Novel Research." J. Randolph Cox. * December 1985.

"The Hess Collection: A Unique Opportunity for Dime Novel Research." Karen Nelson Hoyle.

"Child Labor Portrayals in the Stratemeyer Syndicate Series Books, 1900-1920." Deidre Johnson. * April 1983.

"Speaking from experience: Past, Present and Future of Dime Novel Scholarship." J. Randolph Cox. * October 1985.

"Out of the Western Wilderness: The Evolution of Metta F. Victor's Dime Novel Women." Donna Casella-Kern.

"Urban Images in Street and Smith's *My Queen* Series." Deidre Johnson.

"Major Dime Authors for Street and Smith Publishing House, 1900-1910—Case Studies." Lydia Schurman Godfrey. * April 1985.

[Saturday evening there was a "Dime Novel Discussion and Display"—and a conversation with Edward T. LeBlanc. * December 1984.]

LOUISVILLE, 1985

"The Secure Old Age of Jack Wright, Boy Inventor; or, The Why and Wherefore of Preservation Microfilming." Suzanna Moody.

"Teaching Beadle Dime Novels in a Graduate American Literature Course." James L. Evans.

"Brotherly Love: The Bitter Rivalry of Two 19th Century Dime Novel Publishers—George & Norman Munro." Lydia Schurman Godfrey. * August 1985.

"Nick Carter, Fact or Fiction: The Historical Context of the American Dime Novel." J. Randolph Cox. * June 1985.

"Growing Up in the Series Books by H. Irving Hancock." Elizabeth S. Frank.

"The Frank Meriwell Saga and Its Influence on Sports Reporting." Edward T. LeBlanc. * February 1986.

"The Literary Life of Edward S. Ellis. Denis Rogers. * October 1985.

[There was an open discussion on Friday following the paper on the Munro brothers]

ATLANTA, 1986

"Street and Smith Publishing House on Its 50th Anniversary, 1905." Lydia Schurman Godfrey. * April 1988

"Reprinted by Popular Demand: Some Publishing Patterns in the Street and Smith Dime Novels." J. Randolph Cox. * February 1987.

"The Dime Novel's Creeping Liberalism; or, A Northern View of Southern Ethnic." J. B. Dobkin. * August 1986 (as "Treatment of Blacks in Dime Novels").

"The Civil War in Dime Novels: A Bibliographical Review." Edward T. LeBlanc. * April 1987.

"The Bobbsey Twins, 1904, 1950, and 1961." Deidre Johnson.

"Choosing the Right Path: Didacticism in Choose-Your-Own Adventure Books." Pat Pflieger.

"Buckskin Sam's Portrayal of Texas in Beadle Dime Novels." James L. Evans. * December 1986.

"Preservation Microfilming of Hess Collection Dime Novels." [a progress report] Suzanna Moody.

MONTREAL, 1987

"Armed with Pen and Ink: The Oliver Optic-Louisa May Alcott Feud." John T. Dizer. * August 1987.

"Will the Real Bertha Clay Please Stand Up?" Arlene Moore.

"Airships, Submersibles, and Steam-Powered Men: SF in the Dime Novel." Edward T. LeBlanc. * February 1988.

"Around the World in Many Ways: The Travels of Frank Reade, Jr." J. Randolph Cox.

"Getting His Man: Laurie York Erskine and Renfrew of the Mounted." David Kirk Vaughan. * June 1987.

"Dime Novel Days: The Writer Learns His Craft." Lydia Schurman Godfrey. * December 1988.

"Frowned Upon, But Loved: Gustaf Tenggren and His Little Golden Books." Karen Nelson Hoyle.

"Joseph Badger's Beadle Dime Novels About Joaquin Murieta." James L. Evans. * December 1987.

NEW ORLEANS, 1988

"Up in the Air with Andy Lane: The Eustace Adams Books." David K. Vaughan. * August-October 1988.

"Down with the Kaiser and Up with the Flag; or, How the Boy Scouts of America Won the First World War." M. Paul Holsinger. * June 1989.

"The Boy Scouts versus the Series Books; or, Who's the Guy in the White Hat?" John T. Dizer.

"Heroines in Dime Novels." J. B. Dobkin. * June 1988 (as "The Nickel Library Heroine, 1895-1911").

"Keep the Home Fires Burning: National Stability and Popular Fiction from Sumter to the Centennial." Kathleen Diffley.

"Gender, Romance and the Work Place: The Discovery of the Working Girl in 19th Century Popular Fiction." Jean Carwile Masteller.

"Jack Harkaway, British and American Folk Hero." Edward T. LeBlanc. * February 1989.

"Robert Merry's Museum and the Lure of the Sensational." Pat Pflieger.

"Anthony Comstock and His Crusade Against 'Immoral' 19th Century Dime Novels and Story Papers." Lydia Cushman Schurman.

"The Use of Mexican Characters in Dime Novels of the Southwest." James L. Evans.

"Internal Publishing Practices of 19th Century Story Newspapers." Arlene Moore.

"*The Dime Novel Companion*—a research Tool in the Making." J. Randolph Cox.

ST. LOUIS, 1989

"The Dime Novel and Its Successors." Edward T. LeBlanc. * August 1989.

"Thomson Burtis' *Rex Lee* Aviation Stories." David K. Vaughan.

"Jim Hatfield, Texas Ranger." Al Tonik.

"Our Relations: How Dime Novels Grew to Be Series Books." J. Randolph Cox.

"William T. Adams and His Contributions to *Student and Schoolmate*." Peter C. Walther.

"The Dime Novel Publishing World, 1860-1915." Lydia Cushman Schurman.

"The Rover Boys: How They Were Printed." John T. Dizer.

"The Hess Collection: Past, Present and Future." Deidre Johnson.

"*Malaeska*, At the Margins of Gender and Geography." Sarah Witte.

"Conflicts Along the Rio Grande: Beadle Dime Novels." James L. Evans.

"An American Countess; or, Marrying a Title: The Myth and the Reality." Arlene Moore.

"A Dime Novel Roundup: Prospects for Progress." [an open forum]

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FRANK MERRIWELL ON BROADWAY

By Fred L. King

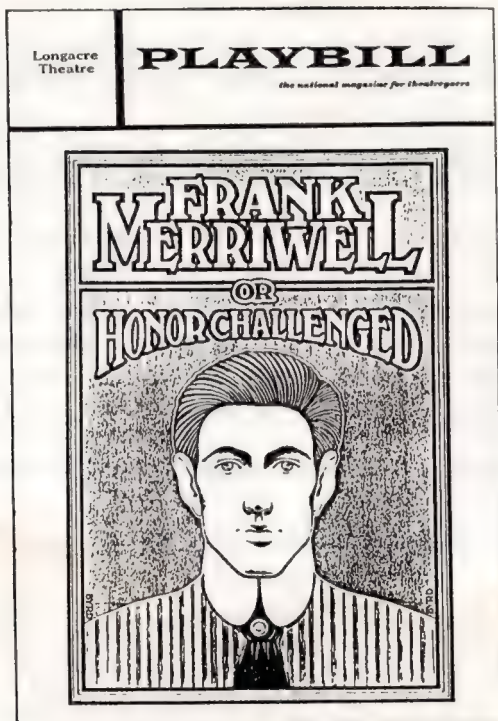
Many aficionados of Frank Merriwell may be unaware that a serious attempt was once made to produce a Broadway musical based on the fictional character. Titled FRANK MERRIWELL or HONOR CHALLENGED, the musical production apparently lasted for only a very few performances [one, Ed. note] before closing. An April, 1971, *Playbill* (a theatre magazine) gave a re-

view of the production but did not give a date of performance.

The musical play was presented at the Longacre Theatre in New York and was based entirely on Frank Merriwell's Schooldays. It was written in two parts with a total of 16 "chapters" and had a total of 21 original songs including titles such as "Frank, Frank, Frank," and "Inza." Frank was played by actor Larry Ellis and Inza by actress Linda Donovan. Other characters in the script included those familiar to Merriwell readers including Bart Hodge and Belinda Snodd. The writers, actors and actresses are made up of veterans of the stage generally rather than unknowns, yet the play failed to generate great interest to theatre goers. This is not unusual, of course. For every Oklahoma or Brigadoon there must be thousands of failing plays.

The best clue to the origin of the musical play has to be in a note about the co-author and co-composer, Skip Redwine. With experience as associate musical director for such renowned musicals as Applause and Mama, Redwine apparently turned to a favorite subject for his original musical efforts. The review states, "Skip's hobby of collecting old movies has taken a back seat to his new hobby of collecting rare Tip Top Weeklies and Frank Merriwell reissues, of which he now has several hundred."

Merriwell fans have access to the 1930s film chapter play but presumably the musical was not filmed as was the earlier serial. Too bad, to a true Merriwell buff, any Merriwell material lost is a tragedy.



CHOICE PASSAGES

Presented by Victor A. Berch

Too often we researchers get too involved with the serious mindedness of our work in the field of the dime novel. Not that the studies which derive from that work do not merit their place. However, it is most refreshing at times to uncover a work which injects a degree of humor into our lives and allows us the privilege of taking a break from the serious mindedness of our scholarly pursuits.

Recently, I discovered one such work which was published some 65 years ago. This was the spoof of dime novel plots written by the American humorist, George Ade, and entitled BANG! BANG! Its subtitle, A COLLECTION OF STORIES INTENDED TO RECALL MEMORIES OF THE NICKEL LIBRARY DAYS WHEN BOYS WERE SUPERMEN AND MURDER A FINE ART, epitomizes the gist of its contents. I found the book a sheer joy to read and wish to share a choice passage or two from each of the eleven tales with those of you who are willing to put up with my frivolity.

1. HANDSOME CYRIL; or, The Messenger Boy with the Warm Feet
As he sped along the street he chanced to read the card given to him by this beautiful lady. It ran thus:
Mrs. Gertrude Fisher
775 Michigan Boulevard
Second Flat
"Merciful heaven!" he gasped, "My mother!"
2. THE GLENDON MYSTERY, or, Eddie Parks, the Newsboy Detective
Such is the youth who at the age of nine has made himself a most celebrated detective in the great city of Chicago, the terror of all criminals.
3. EDDIE PARKS TO THE RESCUE; or, The National Bank Robbery
Eddie Parks was offered a reward of \$25,000 by the bank. At first he refused it, but afterwards he accepted it and devoted it to useful charities.
4. CLARENCE ALLEN, THE HYPNOTIC BOY JOURNALIST; or, The Mysterious Disappearance of the United States Government Bonds.
As for the thieves, they were promptly sent to prison on the testimony of our hero, who achieved a great reputation for his courageous conduct and was soon after admitted to membership in the League of American Wheelmen, a distinction which few merit and a glory which few achieve.
5. THE STEEL BOX; or, The Robbers of Rattlesnake Gulch
The Daltons were either hanged or sent to prison again. Eddie Parks refused the \$50,000 offered by the railway company and express company, saying that he preferred to go back among his loved companions and sell newspapers.
6. ROLLO JOHNSON, THE BOY INVENTOR; or, The Demon Bicycle and Its Daring Rider
Our hero received a million dollars for his invention and achieved just fame, but he did not relinquish his study and every day he may be seen in his workshop inventing some useful article for the betterment of mankind.
7. THE BOY CHAMPION; or, America's Fair Name Defended
"I am an American, and no American ever took a bribe. What do

I care for one hundred thousand dollars, when my honor and my country's fair name are at stake?"

Once more his eyes filled with tears.

8. THE GREAT STREET-CAR ROBBERY; or, The Newsboy Detective on the Trail
The robbers were promptly sent to prison, and our hero received \$5,000 reward which he generously gave to the widowed mother of Lawrence Hetherton.
9. THE KLONDIKE RESCUE: or, The Mysterious Guide
"Come, I will share my fortune with you and you must make your home with us."
"No," said our hero with great firmness. "I cannot do so. I have my work to do. The weak must be protected. The wrongs of the innocent must be avenged."
10. THE GOODLOT MURDER CASE; or, Solving the Mystery
"I found that the person who used that tooth and the person who chewed the gum contained in this box are one and the same."
11. THE AVENGER AND GENERAL BOLERO; or, The Spanish Plot Foiled
"Wonderful! Then you are not a Cuban?"
"I am an American," said the other promptly.
"But you speak perfect Spanish."
"I learned it at night school in Chicago."

These choice passages clearly point out that those do-gooders and protectors of "high" literature who have so unjustly cast many calumnies against the merits of dime novels are in the wrong. They will surely have to agree that the dime novel contributed its share to instill honor, patriotism and a noble work ethic among the American youth of the day. Has not George Ade's skillfully woven text called our attention to those attributes which all youth hopes to attain?

THE END

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